



## TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

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### PRESS RELEASE

## All who served and live in Texas now Texas veterans

Patterson drops one-year residency requirement for VLB benefits

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AUSTIN — The 1.7 million veterans living in Texas - regardless of when they moved here - will qualify for benefits from the Texas Veterans Land Board as of Dec. 21. "A veteran is a veteran, and this change opens up VLB programs to all who served and now call Texas home," said Jerry Patterson, chairman of the Texas Veterans Land Board.

Patterson said he is dropping the VLB's one-year residency requirement because too many deserving Texas veterans were not able to access the benefits they've earned. "Under the old rules, even Davy Crockett would not have qualified for VLB benefits had he survived the Alamo," Patterson said.

Crockett left his home in Tennessee in November 1835, telling his political rivals, "You may all go to Hell and I will go to Texas." He mustered into the Texas Army in January 1836 and was killed in March at the Alamo.

"Opening up the VLB's programs to all Texas veterans is one of the greatest privileges I've enjoyed as chairman of the VLB," Patterson said. "These benefits are no entitlement, they are earned and I am honored to be able to deliver them."

Texas is one of only five states to offer a veterans program, and VLB benefits are widely seen as the best in the nation.

"The VLB offers Texas veterans more than just a land loan nowadays," Patterson said. "From low-cost land and home loans to long-term, high-quality nursing care and free burial in any of three Texas State Veterans Cemeteries, the VLB has grown and we want to get the word out."

Along with the expansion of who is eligible, the VLB has begun an aggressive marketing campaign to let veterans know what they have earned. A new logo and slogan are the most visible signs of this change, and both are featured prominently on a new website - [www.texasveterans.com](http://www.texasveterans.com) - and in a new ad campaign that began running on Texas TV and radio stations this fall. The VLB has embraced social media. Veterans may now share VLB news via their own social networks with easy links from the VLB's home page. Or veterans can keep up with VLB news via Facebook or Twitter.

The Texas tradition of taking care of veterans dates back to the Republic, when those who signed on to fight for independence from Mexico were rewarded with generous tracts of land. The VLB was created in 1946 after Texas voters approved a constitutional amendment authorizing \$25 million in bonds to help World War II veterans buy land.

Since then, the land and home loan programs have funded more than \$9 billion in loans and become popular options for veterans looking to buy the American Dream.

The VLB has also built seven - soon to be eight - Texas State Veterans Homes, where veterans and their spouses enjoy peace of mind in their golden years. The homes, in Amarillo, Big Spring, Bonham, El Paso, Floresville, McAllen, Temple and soon Tyler, filled a need by offering comprehensive rehabilitation programs, special diets, recreational activities, social services, libraries, and a certified, secured Alzheimer's unit in each home.

In addition, the VLB has built three Texas State Veterans Cemeteries - in Abilene, Killeen and Mission - and is hard at work on another in Corpus Christi. Texas veterans are entitled to free burial with full military honors at each of these magnificent facilities.

For more information on VLB benefits, visit [www.texasveterans.com](http://www.texasveterans.com) .

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